

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

No. 7. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 16, 1869.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

WRECKED IN PORT.

A SERIAL STORY BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP."

CHAPTER IX. THE TENTH EARL.

HETHERINGTON HOUSE stands in Beaufort-square, forming one side of that confessedly aristocratic quarter. The house stands back in melancholy "grounds" of dirty gravel, brown turf, and smutted trees, while the dwarf wall which forms the side of the square, and is indeed a sufficiently huge brick screen, fences off the commonalty, and prevents them from ever catching so much as a glimpse of the Paradise within, save when the great gates are flung open for the entrance or exit of vehicles, or when the porter, so gorgeous and yet so simple, is sunning himself in the calm evening air at the small postern door. The Countess of Hetherington likes this brick screen, and looks upon it as a necessary appanage of her rank. When visitors, having exhausted every topic of conversation possible to their great minds, a feat which is easily performed in the space of five minutes, and beginning to fear the immediate advent of brain softening if not of idiocy, suddenly become possessed with a fresh idea after a lengthened contemplation of the wall in front of them, and with an air of desperation ask whether it does not make the house dull, Lady Hetherington says that, on the contrary, it is the only thing that renders the house habitable. She confesses that, during the time she is compelled to be in London, the sight of hack cabs, and policemen on their beat, and those kind of things, are not absolutely necessary to her existence, and as Sir Charles Dumfunk insists on her rooms facing the west, she is glad that the wall

is there to act as a screen. Oh yes, she is perfectly aware that Lord Letterkenney had the screen of Purcell House pulled down and an open Italian façade erected in its place, the picture of which was in the illustrated papers, but as Lady Letterkenney until her marriage had lived in Ireland, and had probably never seen anything human except priests and pigs, the sight of civilised beings was doubtless an agreeable novelty to her. The same circumstances did not exist in her, Lady Hetherington's, case, and she decidedly liked the screen.

The Earl likes the screen also, but he never says anything about it, chiefly because no one ever asks his opinion on any subject. He likes it because it is his, the Earl of Hetherington's, and he likes looking at it as he likes looking at the coronet on his plate, on his carriage panels, and his horses' harness; at his family history as set forth by Burke and Debrett, and at the marginal illustrations of his coat of arms as given in those charming volumes; at his genealogical tree, a mysterious work of art which hangs in the library looking something like an enlarged "sampler" worked by a school-girl, and from the contemplation of which he derives intense delight. It does not take a great deal to fill Lord Hetherington's soul with rapture. Down in Norfolk villages, in the neighbourhood of his ancestral home, and far away in scattered cottages on the side of green Welsh mountains, where the cross-tree rears its inopportune head in the midst of the lovely landscape, and where smoke and coal-dust permeate the soft delicious air, his lordship, as landlord and mine-holder, is spoken of with bated breath by tenants and workmen, and regarded as one of the hardest-headed, tightest-fisted men of business by stewards

and agents. They do not see much, scarcely anything, of him, they say, and they don't need to, if he's to be judged by the letters he writes and the orders he sends. To screw up the rents and to lengthen the hours of labour was the purport of these letters, while their style was modelled on that used by the Saxon Franklin to his hog-hind—curt, overbearing, and offensive. Agents and stewards, recipients of these missives, say bitter words about Lord Hetherington in private, and tenants and workmen curse him secretly as they bow to his decree. To them he is a haughty, selfish, grinding aristocrat, without a thought for any one but himself; whereas in reality he is a chuckle-headed nobleman, with an inordinate idea of his position certainly, but kindly hearted, a slave to his wife, and with one great desire in life, a desire to distinguish himself somehow, no matter how.

He had tried politics. When a young man he had sat as Lord West for his county, and the first Conservative ministry which came into office after he had succeeded to his title, remembering the service which Lord West had done them in roaring, hooting, and yar-yaring in the House of Commons, repaid the obligation by appointing the newly fledged Earl of Hetherington to be the head of one of the inferior departments. Immensely delighted was his lordship at first, went down to the office daily, to the intense astonishment of the departmental private secretary, whose official labours had hitherto been confined to writing about four letters a day, took upon himself to question some of the suggestions which were made for his approval, carped at the handwriting of the clerks, and for at least a week thought he had at length found his proper place in the world, and had made an impression. But it did not last. The permanent heads of the department soon found him out, scratched through the external cuticle of pride and pomposity, and discovered the true obstinate dullard underneath. And then they humoured him, and led him by the nose, as they had led many a better man before him, and he subsided into a nonentity; and then his party went out of office, and when they came in again they declined to reappoint Lord Hetherington, though he clamoured ever so loudly.

Social science was the field in which his lordship next disported himself, and prolix, pragmatical, and eccentric as are its professors generally, he managed to excel them

all. Lord Hetherington had his theories on the utilisation of sewage and the treatment of criminals, on strikes and trades unions—the first of which he thought should be suppressed by the military, the second put down by Act of Parliament—and on the proper position of women; on which subject he certainly spoke with more than his usual spirit and fluency. But he was a bore upon all, and at length the social science audiences, so tolerant of boredom, felt that they could stand him no longer, and coughed him down gently but firmly when he attempted to address them. Lord Hetherington then gave up social science in disgust, and let his noble mind lie fallow for a few months, during which time he employed himself in cutting his noble fingers with a turning-lathe which he caused to be erected in his mansion, and which amused him very much: until it suddenly occurred to him that the art of bookbinding was one in which his taste and talent might find a vent. So the room in which the now deserted turning-lathe stood was soon littered with scraps of leather and floating fragments of gilt-leaf, and there his lordship spent hours every day looking on at two men very hard at work in their shirt sleeves, and occasionally handing them the tools they asked for, and thus he practised the art of bookbinding. Every one said it was an odd thing for a man to take to, but every one knew that Lord Hetherington was an odd man, consequently no one was astonished, after the bound volumes had been duly exhibited to dining or calling friends, and had elicited the various outbursts of "Jove!" "Ah!" "Charming!" "Quite too nice!" and "Can't think how he does it, eh?" which politeness demanded, no one was astonished to hear that his lordship, panting for something fresh in which to distinguish himself, had found it in taxidermy, which was now absorbing all the energies of his noble mind. The receipt of a packet of humming birds, presented by a poor relation in the navy, first turned Lord Hetherington's thoughts to this new pursuit, and he acted with such promptitude that before the end of a week, Mr. Byrne—small, shrunken, and high-shouldered—had taken the place at the bench lately occupied by the stalwart men in shirt sleeves, but the smell of paste and gum had been supplanted by that of pungent chemicals, the floor was strewn with feathers and wool instead of leather and gilt-leaf, and his lordship, still looking on

and handing tools to his companion, was stuffing birds very much in the same way as he had bound books.

It was a fine sight to see old Jack Byrne, "Bitter Byrne," the ultra-radical, the sourest-tongued orator of the Spartan Club, the ex-Chartist prisoner, waited on by gorgeous footmen in plush and silk stockings, fed on French dishes and dry sherry, and accepting it all as if he had been born to the situation.

"Why should I quarrel with my bread and butter, or what's a devilish deal better than bread and butter," he asked, in the course of a long evening's ramble with Walter Joyce, "because it comes from a representative of the class I hate? I earn it, I work honestly and hard for my wage, and suppose I am to act up to the sham self-denial preached in some of the prints which batten on the great cause without understanding or caring for it—suppose I were to refuse the meal which my lord's politeness ends me, as some of your self-styled Gracchi or Patriots would wish, how much further should we have developed the plans, or by what the more should we have dealt a blow at the institution we are labouring to destroy? Not one jot! My maxim, as I have told you before, is, use these people! Hate them if you will, despise them as you must, but use them!"

The old man's vehemence had a certain weight with Joyce, who, nevertheless, was not wholly convinced as to the propriety of his friend's position, and said, "You justify your conduct by Lord Hetherington's, then? You use each other?"

"Exactly! My Lord Hetherington in Parliament says, or would say if he was allowed the chance, but they know him too well for that, so he can only show by his votes and his proxies—proxies, by the Lord! isn't that a happy state of things when a minister can swamp any measure that he chooses by pulling from his pocket a few papers sent to him by a few brother peers, who care so little about the question in hand that they won't even leave their dinner tables to come down and hear it discussed!—says that he loathes what he is pleased to call the lower classes, and considers them unworthy of being represented in the legislature. But then he wants to stuff birds, or rather to be known as a bird stuffer of taste, and none of the House of Peers can help him there. So he makes inquiries, and is referred to me, and engages me, and we work together—neither

abrogating our own sentiments. He uses my skill, I take his money, each has his quid pro quo, and if the time were ever to come—as it may come, Walter, mark my words—as it *must* come, for everything is tending towards it, when the battle of the poor against the rich, the bees against the drones, is fought in this country, fought out, I mean, practically and not theoretically, we shall each of us, my Lord Hetherington and I, be found on our respective sides without the slightest obligation from one to the other!"

Joyce had come to look forward to those evening walks with the old man as the pleasantest portion of the day. From nine till six he laboured conscientiously at the natural history work which Mr. Byrne had procured for him, dull uninteresting work enough, but sufficiently fairly rewarded. Then he met his old friend at Blifkins's, and after their frugal meal they set out for a long ramble through the streets. Byrne was full of information, which, in his worldly-wise fashion, he imparted, tinged with social philosophy or dashed with an undercurrent of his own peculiar views. Of which an example. Walter Joyce had been standing for five minutes, silent, rapt in delight at his first view of the Parliament Houses as seen from Westminster Bridge. A bright moonlight night, soft, dreamy, even here, with a big yellow harvest moon coming up from the back, throwing the delicate tracery into splendid relief, and sending out the shadows thick and black; the old man looking on calmly, quietly chuckling at the irrepressible enthusiasm mantling over his young friend's cheeks and gleaming in his eyes.

"A fine place, lad?"

"Fine! splendid, superb!"

"Well, not to put *too* fine a point upon it, we'll say fine. Ah, they may blackguard Barry as much as they like, and when it comes to calling names and flinging mud in print, mind you, I don't know anybody to beat your architect or your architect's friend, but there's not another man among 'em could have done anything like that! That's a proper dignified house for the Parliament of the People to sit in—when it comes!"

"But it does sit there, doesn't it?"

"It? What? The Parliament of the People? No, sir; that sits, if you would believe certain organs of the press, up a court in Fleet-street, where it discusses the affairs of the nation over screws of shag tobacco and pots of fourpenny ale. What

sits there before us is the Croesus Club, a select assemblage of between six and seven hundred members, who drop down here to levy taxes, and job generally, in the interval between dinner and bed."

"Are they — are they there now?" asked Joyce, eagerly, peering with outstretched neck at the building before him.

"Now? No, of course not, man! They're away at their own devices, nine-tenths of them breaking the laws which they helped to make, and all enjoying themselves, and wondering what the devil people find to grumble at!"

"One of the governors of the old school, down, down at Helmingham" — a large knot swelled in Joyce's throat as he said the word, and nearly choked him; never before had he felt the place so far away or the days spent there so long removed from his then life — "was a member of Parliament, I think! Lord Beachcroft. Did you ever hear of him?"

The old man smiled sardonically. "Hear of him, man? There's not one of them that has made his mark, or that is likely to make his mark in any way, that I don't know by sight, or that I haven't heard speak. I know Lord Beachcroft well enough; he's a philanthropist, wants camphorated chalk tooth-powder for the paupers, and horse exercise for the convicts. Registered among the noodles, ranks A 1, weakly built, leaden-headed, and wants an experienced keeper!"

"That doctrine would have been taken as heresy at Helmingham! I know he came there once on our speech-day to deliver the prizes, and the boys all cheered him to the echo!"

"The boys! of course they did! The child is father to the man! I forgot, people don't read Wordsworth now-a-days, but that's what he says, and he and Tennyson are the only poet-philosophers that have risen amongst us for many years, and boys shout, as men would, at the mere sight, at the mere taste of a lord! How they like to roll 'your lordship' round their mouths, and fear lest they should lose the slightest atom of its flavour! Not that the boys did wrong in cheering Lord Beachcroft! He's harmless enough and well-meaning, I'm sure, and stands well up among the noodles. And it's better to stand anywhere amongst them than to be affiliated to the other party!"

"The other party? Who are they, Mr. Byrne?"

"The rogues, lad, the rogues! Rogues

and noodles make up the blessed lot of senators sitting in your gimcrack palace, who vote away your birthright and mine, tax the sweat of millions, bow to Gold Stick and kiss Black Rod's coat-tails, send our fleets to defend Von Sourkraut's honour, or our soldiers to sicken of jungle fever in pursuit of the rebel Lollum Dha's adversaries! Parliament? Representatives of the people? Very much! My gallant friend, all pipeclay and padded breast, who won't hear of the army estimates being reduced; my learned friend, who brings all his forensic skill and all his power of tongue-fence, first learned in three-guinea briefs at the Old Bailey, and now educated up into such silvery eloquence, into play for the chance of a judgeship and a knighthood; the volatile Irish member, who subsidises finally into the consulate of Zanzibar; the honourable member, who, having in his early youth swept out a shop at Loughboro', and arrived in London with eightpence, has accumulated millions, and is, of course, a strong Tory, with but two desires in life, to keep down 'the people,' and to obtain a card for his wife for the Premier's Saturday evenings — these are the representatives of the people for you! Rogues and noodles, noodles and rogues. Don't you like the picture?"

"I should hate it, if I believed in it, Mr. Byrne!" said Joyce, moving away, "but I don't! You won't think me rude or unkind, but — but I've been brought up in so widely different a faith. I've been taught to hold in such reverence all that I hear you deny, that —"

"Stick to it, lad! hold to it while you can!" said the old man, kindly, laying his hand on his companion's arm. "My doctrines are strong meat for babes — too strong, I dare say — and you're but a toothless infant yet in these things, anyhow! So much the better for you. I recollect a story of some man who said he was never happy or well after he was told he had a liver! Go on as long as you can in pleasant ignorance of the fact that you have a political liver. Some day it will become torpid and sluggish, and then — then come and talk to old Dr. Byrne. Till then, he won't attempt to alarm you, depend upon it!"

Not very long to be deferred was the day in which the political patient was to come to the political physician for advice and for treatment.

Beaufort-square looked hideously dull as Lord Hetherington drove through it on his

way to his home from the railway station a few days after the conversation above recorded, and the clanging of his own great gates as they shut behind him echoed and re-echoed through the vast deserted space. The gorgeous porter and all the regiment of domestics were down at Westhope, the family place in Norfolk, so the carriage gates were opened by a middle-aged female with her head tied up for toothache, and Mrs. Mason, the housekeeper, with a female retinue, was waiting to receive his lordship on the steps. Always affable to old servants of the family, whose age, long service, and comfortable comely appearance do him credit, as he thinks, Lord Hetherington exchanges a few gracious words with Mrs. Mason, desires that Mr. Byrne shall be shown in to him so soon as he arrives, and makes his way across the great hall to the library. The shutters of his room have been opened, but there has been no time given for further preparations, and the big writing-table, the globes, and the bookcases are all enswathed in ghostly holland drapery. The bust of the ninth earl, Lord Hetherington's father, has slipped its head out of its covering, and looks astonished and as if it had been suddenly called up in its night-clothes. My lord looks dismayed, as well he may, at the dreary room, but finds no more cheerful outlook from the window into the little square garden, where a few melancholy leaves are rotting in the dirty corners into which they have drifted, and where Mrs. Mason's grandson, unconscious of observation, is throwing stones at a cab. My lord rattles the loose silver in his trousers' pockets, walks up to the fireplace and inspects his tongue in the looking-glass, whistles thoughtfully, sighs heavily, and is beginning to think he shall go mad, when Mrs. Mason opens the door and announces "Mr. Byrne."

"How do, Byrne?" says his lordship, much relieved. "Glad to see you! Come up on purpose! Want your help!"

Mr. Byrne returns his lordship's salutations, and quietly asks in what way he can be of use. His lordship is rather taken aback at being so suddenly brought to book, but says, with some hesitation,

"Well, not exactly in your own way, Byrne; I don't think I shall do any more what-d'ye-call-ums, birds, any more—for the present, I mean, for the present. Her ladyship thought those last screens so good that it would be useless to try to improve on them, and so she's given me—I mean I've got—another idea."

Mr. Byrne, with the faintest dawn of a cynical grin on his face, bows and waits.

"Fact is," pursues his lordship, "my place down at Westhope, full of most monstrously interesting records of our family from the time of—oh, the Crusaders and Guy Fawkes and the Pretender, and all that kind of thing; records, don't you know, old papers, and what they call documents, you know, and those kind of things. Well, I want to take all these things and make 'em into a sort of history of the family, you know, to write it and have it published, don't they call it? You know what I mean."

Mr. Byrne intimates that they do call it published, and that he apprehends his lordship's meaning completely.

"Well, then, Byrne," his lordship continues, "what I sent for you for is this. 'Tisn't in your line, I know, but I've found you clever and all that kind of thing, and above your station. Oh, I mean it, I do indeed, and I want you to find me some person, respectable and educated and all that, who will just go through these papers, you know, and select the right bits, you know, and write them down, you know, and, in point of fact, just do—You know what I mean!"

Mr. Byrne, with a radiant look which his face but seldom wore, averred that he not merely understood what was meant, but that he could recommend the very man whom his lordship required, a young man of excellent address, good education, and great industry.

"And he'll understand——?" asked Lord Hetherington, hesitatingly, and with a curious look at Mr. Byrne.

"Everything!" replied the old man. "Your lordship's book will be the most successful thing you've done!"

"Then bring him to the Clarendon at twelve the day after to-morrow! As he's to live in the house, and that kind of thing, her ladyship must see him before he's engaged!"

"I suppose I may congratulate you, my boy!" said Byrne to Joyce, a day or two afterwards, as they walked away from the Clarendon Hotel after their interview, "though you don't look much pleased about it!"

"I'm an ungrateful brute," said Walter; "I ought to have thanked you the instant the door closed! For it is entirely owing to you and your kindness that I have obtained this splendid chance! But——"

"But what?" said the old man, kindly.
 "Did you notice that woman's reception of me, and the way she spoke?"

"That woman? Oh, my lady! Hm—she's not too polite to those she considers her inferiors!"

"Polite! To me it was imperious, insolent, degrading! But I can put up with it!" And he added softly to himself, "For Marian's sake!"

A PEASANT WEDDING IN BRITANY.

On the crest of a high hill in the very heart of Brittany—far from railroads, and where stage coaches are rare visitors, welcomed at long intervals—stands a quaint old village, nestling between copse and vineyard. A single jagged street staggers eccentrically from brow to brow; a line of tottering huts, moss-grown, mud-plastered, straw-thatched, stretches on either side; a curious little one-sided church, with square and toppling tower, rusted iron cross, shapeless windows, and obstinately crooked roof, stands in the centre; before which lies, worn by much use, the village lawn.

I was making the tour of Brittany with my own horse and chaise, and climbed the long road which ascended to La Vertou, late in the afternoon of an autumn day, when the fruit of the ripe vineyards yielded a thick and delicious perfume to the air. On driving into the village street, and while directing my whole attention to the search for a possible village inn—for it was by no means certain that I should find such an institution—I was struck by a certain activity among the primitive folk, in contrast with the sleepy air of the other villages through which I had passed. The huts seemed to have emptied their whole population—old, middle aged, youthful, and infantile—into the road; there was fast talking and laughter. The good peasant people, too, were unusually well dressed; the men's hats were not quite so dirty and sun-tanned, their blue blouses not quite so crumpled, their shoes not quite so rough as I had been wont to see; the same was observable of the women's coifs, shawls, and chains. On the lawn, certain rustic games were going forward; at the doors of the shops, the gossips were gathered, in high glee. I observed one group, larger than the rest, which seemed to attract particular attention. A middle-aged peasant, with a hardy-looking woman by his side, closely followed by a younger couple, and behind them by a merry shoal of village lads and maidens, was passing from shop to shop, stopping a while at each. As the peasant approached the village merchant would advance, with great ceremony doff his hat and salute him and usher him and his troupe within; while the gossips would separate and allow the company to pass, and then crowd eager round the door. I was sorely perplexed to guess what this was all about.

There was the village inn at last, right under the little church, with a big elm in front, and seats around its trunk; an odd gable jutting out streetwards; and a smiling fat landlord and his buxom dame bowing and smirking in the doorway, happy to have a stranger guest. Horse and chaise were stowed away—where, I knew not, and know not to this day—my small quantity of luggage was deposited in the best room but one, and in a quarter of an hour I was seated at a simple, clean, and tempting table, with a bottle of capital wine at my elbow, and a plump roast fowl before me. As I was thirsting for company quite as much as for wine, I bade mine host sit at table with me and partake. I asked him (the calls of hunger partially satisfied) what saint's festival it was? Mine host laughed a slight respectful laugh, and with the French genius for repartee, replied:

"What saint, Monsieur? Why, Saint Matrimony, parbleu!"

He then proceeded to inform me that Nannine, the daughter of Picquet, the village sabôt maker, was to be wedded on the morrow to Jacques Blot, a thriving young farmer of the neighbourhood.

"You see, Monsieur, when a youngster among us falls in love with a lass, the first thing he does is to run to the village tailor. Monsieur, the village tailor is our notary, and keeps our family secrets, and makes our marriages. And Monsieur Poppeau, *our* village tailor, is one of your model hommes d'affaires. Dame! he is the hardest headed, most silent, profoundest, most persuasive man in France. Well, 'tis he to whom young Jacques resorted, to promote his suit with the pretty little Nannine. Monsieur Poppeau forthwith shouldered his broom."

"His broom?"

"Monsieur, the symbol of his errand. When one sees the broom coming, one knows that one's daughter is sought for, and is to be swept out of one's house. Monsieur Poppeau, broom on shoulder, repairs to Monsieur Picquet. The marriage contract is drawn by Monsieur Poppeau, who has, as perquisites, presents of blouses and franc pieces, a pair of stockings of different colours—worked by Nannine's fingers—and a place of honour at all the marriage ceremonies. Then comes the civil marriage, which you doubtless know about. But they are not tied yet, not by a good deal. For a fortnight, each goes back to his and her own house, works as usual, seldom sees the other beloved, and waits in patience—parbleu, how hard it is!—for the proper time to expire. This rather uncomfortable fortnight Jacques and Nannine have just completed; it was over to-day; and to-morrow they will be fairly tied by the ceremony of the church."

"But what was being done to-day?"

"Ah, to-day! Yes, they were buying the wedding presents. The two middle-aged folk you saw at the head of the procession were the father of Jacques, and the mother of Nannine: each of the young couple having but one parent

living. Just behind them, doubtless, was the young couple, bashfully following. The parents were going about, buying the presents; here a silk dress, there a fine lace coif, yonder some article of menage, or jewellery, or farmers' tools or stock. 'Tis a holiday for all the young people of the village. Some of them have been having a dance, with music, on the lawn; others, the more well-to-do, have been escorting Jacques and Nannine to the pâtisserie and cabaret, where the happy couple have been treated to wines, fruits, and cakes; others have been following the parents from shop to shop, and bearing home the presents as they were purchased."

Mine host and I, our repast over, repaired to the little bench under the gable of the inn, and lighted our pipes. We had not sat there long, when the peasant whom I had noticed leading the procession—the father of Jacques—came up, followed by a merry troop of young villagers.

"He's coming to invite me to the wedding," whispered the landlord. Which he did. Then, turning to me with a profound salutation, Jacques's father remarked that he perceived I was a stranger, and hoped I would likewise honour him with my presence, not only to the ceremony, but to the succeeding festivities. I at once accepted the invitation.

"I beg Monsieur's pardon," said mine host, as I was about to ascend, candle in hand, to my chamber, "but if Monsieur would wish to see the marriage, he must rise very early. The curé will be at the altar by seven. I pray Monsieur to forgive my not giving him the best room. But it is a custom that the bridegroom should hire the best room of the inn the night before the wedding, for the musicians, who come from the city, twenty leagues away."

At six on the fresh October morning, I was dressed and at my simple breakfast of bread, fruit, and wine; and at ten minutes before seven I repaired with mine host and hostess to the village church. The slate-coloured dawn was just mellowing into day as we issued into the zig-zag street, and the little population were already astir, hastening in chattering groups towards the scene of the ceremony. They were crowding in at the door of the oddest little, one-sided, worn, and musty church you ever looked on: with ancient frescoes half obliterated, faded altar cloths, and feeble-looking candlesticks; at the upper end were two dim flickering tapers, their rays intercepted by the squat thick-set form (clothed in sacred attire) of the village curé; just below him was the village beadle, with enormous gaudy chapeau, shivering with cold; the curé holding in his sleek fat hands a well-worn book; the beadle, clutching his staff of authority.

Jacques and Nannine, clad in the newest and best apparel the village could afford, reverently approach the altar and kneel; their parents come after, and stand demurely behind. The rustic population is very quiet and attentive, and evidently impressed by the holy place. Then follows the stately Romish marriage

ceremony, needless to describe. No sooner have the last intonation and the blessing passed the priest's lips than the auditory begin to chatter and laugh, to hurry up to bride and bridegroom and to shower honest and hearty kisses on them—in which the curé, by the by, is not slow to join. This over, the married pair and their especial friends follow the good pastor into the sacristy behind the altar. As a stranger, I am politely bidden to come too. Here, are spread some cold meat, bread, and wine, of which all, Nannine included, partake with lusty zest, and there is many a joke and there is much rallying, in which the priest is merriest of all.

The village folk have meanwhile been busy on the lawn outside. The grass has been rolled flat, and tables have been placed, and tents erected; the musicians have arrived, well mellowed with wine, and scratching on their fiddles in their impatience to begin. The wedding party, on emerging from the church, is greeted by a queer shrill yell, not unlike an Indian whoop—the Breton cheer; forthwith the musicians mount the table, take their places on round stools, and strike up. The bride and bridegroom proceed to mount a horse: she seated behind him, and clinging to his waist as prettily as possible: and they gallop around the green, to the great amusement and applause of the spectators, some half-a-dozen times. This traditional custom complied with, the marriage dances begin. Jacques and Nannine are at the head of the first set, opposite the parents; at the sides are the best friends. It is by no means easy to describe this rustic wedding dance. They leap and bound, entering into the sport as vigorously as they do into their daily work. They swing their arms about in ecstatic fury; the hair escapes from beneath hats and coifs, perspiration covers their foreheads, and their heavy wooden shoes thump and thump on the flattened grass. It was a very ancient dance, mine host told me, handed down from none knew how remote. 'Tis said that this, as well as the other rustic Breton dances, had a religious origin, far back in Druidic ages. The wedding dance is called the "gavotte"; its noticeable feature is, that the most expert dancer leads the rest off into numberless turnings and counterturnings, then abruptly stops and sets them all a-jigging, then rushes off with a sort of "walk round," then resumes his spiral course with a hop and a skip, the rest imitating his every movement with surprising quickness; the whole apparently, not really, performed at the leader's caprice. The dance is made yet more striking by a continual shouting and laughing, an enraptured throwing up of hands, and individual eccentricities and diversions. It is so exhausting that after a little, even the sturdy sons and daughters of the soil are fain to give up; and for awhile they leave the dancing ring to refresh themselves and rest.

Long rude tables have been set along the boundaries of the green, and now fairly groan with a bounteous provision of good things eat-

able and drinkable; monsieur the curé is already seated at the wedding table, with chairs for bride and bridegroom on either side of him. The exhausted but still noisy dancers flock eagerly about the board; it is amazing to see what wonderful morning appetites they have, and how soon the mass of good things disappears. Monsieur le Curé, under the influence of the punch and wine, grows astonishingly funny, is extremely gallant and attentive to the bride, and pledges everybody, even me the stranger guest. Then comes a loud noisy song, under the inspiration of which the dancers resume their places on the sward. This time it is another, and very different dance; you would think that, after the wine, it would be a wilder one than the first; no, it is a sedate movement, the faces of the dancers according with it. They separate into couples, and dance in a sort of procession, one behind the other; it is not unlike the fine old minute in Don Giovanni, only it has a rustic spice to it wanting in the stately aristocratic dance of our grandfathers. All day long alternate dancing, feasting, and singing is kept up, and still the marriage ceremonies are hardly begun.

The company separated a little before sundown, to unite again in front of the church soon after the grey light of twilight had thickened to darkness. The tents which had been erected were illuminated by a hundred waxen candles—and waxen candles, even in the chateaux of noblemen, are aristocratic in Britany. Within the tents were long tables, bounteously laden; without, large fires had been made, and there was every variety of cooking pot, and pitcher, and grill, and saucepan. The tent was, of course, that of the bridal party; and here, among others, were the curé, the doctor, the apothecary, the tailor, the postmaster, and myself. At the upper end of the tent was a little rudely constructed dais, where the beaming Nannine sat; around her were gathered the favoured few, her intimates. Opposite, was the good fat curé, supported on either hand by a buxom rustic dame. When we had all taken our places at the festive board, I looked about for the bridegroom, Jacques, but could see him nowhere; presently, however, the reason was apparent. It is, on the occasion of "La Table de la Mariée," or "Bridal Feast," the custom that certain of the young men should act as butlers and cooks; these offices are assumed by the relatives and near friends of the bridegroom, and are posts of honour. The bridegroom himself performs the double function of chief cook and head butler; he himself is forbidden, by the law of tradition, to take a drop or morsel that night; it is his business to superintend the dishes intended for the bride, and to serve them up before her. So presently in he came with a huge platter, on which lay, in bounteous sauce, a portly turbot; this he deposited before the bride, who rose and bowed with smiling solemnity. Whereupon Monsieur le Curé sprang to his feet, and raising high his glass of brandy punch, called out, "To the bride!"

A summons which no one refused, and which was responded to by a tumultuous jingling of glasses, tossing off of punch, and clapping of feet. It was an improvement on our Anglo-Saxon civilisation, that no speeches were made. But what an orgy succeeded! How shall I describe the noise, and the dancing, and the tipsy songs, and the rude lusty games: not to speak of the promiscuous hugging and kissing, and chasing and fondling which that never-to-be-forgotten scene presented? Of all the gallant company, dawn found the bridegroom, and him alone, sober. The demure and solemn tailor, though an unusually modest man, was painfully boastful of his share in bringing about the present occasion; Monsieur le Curé was now too sombre and dignified by half; and as for Jacques's steady papa and his familiars, the doctor, and the apothecary, and even mine host, they had, long before dawn, disappeared beneath the table, and were being slowly sobered, as morning came, by a bath of dew. The womankind had retired in high spirits; all except the bride, whom custom doomed to sit there on her dais, bolt upright amid the revel, until the first rays of the rising sun should slant into the tent. Jacques had most certainly the worst of the fun. It was his task to carry the jaded roysterers home; and this he did with admirable patience and perseverance. But his reward, the taking home of his pretty spouse, was not even yet earned. The bride must, by inexorable Breton tradition, go home to her mother on the succeeding day; and the orgies must be resumed a second, and yet a third, evening. The second evening was like the first; all boisterousness, singing, shouting, kissing, and final collapsing under the table. The third resembled the two previous evenings, only in slang parlance, "more so;" for on the last, winding up orgies, the shouting and dancing were noisier, the kissing more vigorous, and the drunkenness more general, than ever. Jacques, now permitted to indulge with the rest in deep potations, made up for lost time, and was the very first to slide under the table, where he remained until morning.

There was a curious sight on the morning following the final evening, which was at once a traditional custom, and a scene characteristic of rural Britany. This was the "Beggars' Dance." The remains of the feast, wine and meat, were neatly set on tables in the middle of the green; and all the beggars of the neighbourhood were invited to partake. The villagers gathered in a ring around the space, leaving an opening toward the street. Presently there issued from a little lane a most grotesque procession. There were the halt, the blind, and the lame—the one-legged, the one-eyed, and the one-armed; the patriarchs and the children of mendicancy, ragged and shoeless, with hats crownless, and coats tailless, and gowns threadless; hobbling, and plunging, and limping along, with cracked songs, and yells, and the queerest imaginable movements. Arrived on the green they took position in couples, and performed a singular burlesque on the wedding

dance. This over, they fell to on the feast, with a will, being waited on by the chief dames of the village.

Finally, on the wedding-night—which is the fourth night after the wedding—all the friends of the bridal pair visit them as they lie in the nuptial couch. Each visitor brings a bowl of milk soup; and poor Jacques and Nannine must, *bongré* malgré, receive from every one a spoonful of that beverage. The young girls who thus visit the bridal chamber, secure the pins which have been used in the fastening of Nannine's shawl and gown, as a charm to bring them husbands.

PRECIOUS STONES.

If contingencies prevent your going to Corinth, you content your craving with a panorama of Corinth. If your poverty, but not your will, compel your remaining outside a travelling managerie, you may still have the pleasure of admiring the pictures. When you cannot enter a sweet-smelling cookshop, no law prevents your looking in at the window and sniffing the odours that exhale from below. And if you can't pick up diamonds like Sindbad the Sailor, nor incrust yourself with them like Prince Esterhazy, we advise you not to take the matter to heart, but to console yourself by contemplating them at a distance.

The Cook's Oracle, the *Almanac des Gourmands*, and Brillat-Savarin's *Physiologie du Goût*, have served a series of Barmecide feasts to many a compulsory abstainer. In like manner, those who cannot measure pearls by the pint, nor mark points at whist with unset brilliants, may gratify their tastes for gems by the instructive and interesting *Natural History of Precious Stones* and of the Precious Metals, which Mr. King has given to the world.

Doubtless, jewels are best beheld in situ; the situs, however, being neither the mine nor the matrix, but in their proper place, about some fair personage—which gives you the chance of admiring two beautiful things at once. A drawback is that family diamonds, like family titles, often fall to the lot of the oldest. Moreover, etiquette forbids young ladies to wear much jewellery, diamonds being especially tabooed. Nevertheless, wherever it may be, a good diamond necklace is a pretty thing to look at.

Independent of its surpassing beauty, the diamond strikes the imagination by its value. The re-cutting merely of the Koh-i-noor is said to have cost eight thousand pounds. Other grand diamonds have required a proportional outlay to bring out their intrinsic qualities. Even humble stones make good their claim to attention, and will not be passed by unobserved. In 1664, Mr. Edward Browne wrote to his father, Sir Thomas: "March 2. I went to Mr. Foxe's chamber in Arundell House, where I saw a great many pretty pictures and things cast in brasse, some limmings, divers pretious stones, and one diamond valued at eleven hundred pound."

That superstition and vulgar error should lay hold of so remarkable a natural object as the diamond, might be expected as a matter of course. The Romans, taught by the Indians, valued it entirely on account of its supernatural virtues. They wore the crystals in their native form, without any attempt to polish, much less to engrave them. Such, doubtless, was the ring whose diamond, "*Adamas notissimus*," had flashed in St. Paul's eyes at the momentous audience before the Jewish queen and her too-loving brother, in their "great pomp," and which afterwards, a souvenir of Titus, graced the imperious lady's finger in Juvenal's days. Pliny says the diamond baffles poison, keeps off insanity, and dispels vain fears. The mediæval Italians entitled it "*Pietra della Reconciliazione*," because it maintained concord between husband and wife. On this account it was long held the appropriate stone for setting in the espousal ring.

From Pliny, also, we have the widespread notion that a diamond, which is the hardest of stones, is yet made soft by the blood of a goat—but not except it be fresh and warm. "But this," observes Sir Thomas Browne, "is easier affirmed than proved." Upon this conceit arose another—that the blood of a goat was sovereign for the stone. And so it came to be ordered that the goat should be fed with saxifragous herbs, and such as are conceived of power to break the stone. Another mistake, formerly current, is that the diamond is malleable, and bears the hammer.

There are facts respecting the diamond as strange as the fictions. Example, its constant association with gold, noticed long ago. Where gold is, there is the diamond. This rule breaks up the belief of the old lapidaries that diamonds are found only in the East Indies, and there even are confined to Golconda, Visapoor, Bengal, and Borneo. Diamonds have recently been discovered in most of our gold-yielding colonies, and probably will turn up in all. The coincidence or companionship of gold with diamonds can hardly be accidental, although all the diamond mines whose discovery is recorded have been brought to light in the pursuit of alluvial gold washings—which was notably the case with the oldest in the Serra do Frio, Brazil, and the most productive in the world.

South Africa has yielded diamonds enough to be an earnest of more to come. Australian "diggins" have already furnished a few, and will probably yield a vast supply when their gravel comes to be turned over by people having eyes for other objects than nuggets and gold flakes. In the Paris Exhibition of 1856, two diamonds were to be seen, found in the Macquarie river. In the Exhibition of Native Productions held at Melbourne, 1865, the feature that excited the greatest interest were numerous specimens (small, but undeniable) of the diamond from various parts of the colony. Finally, in last year's Paris Exhibition, Queensland diamonds were produced. Being still rough, unprofessional persons were unable to guess at the quality of their water.

The British Museum, amongst the native diamonds, exhibits an octahedral diamond attached to alluvial gold : and—strange confirmation of the ancient idea as to their affinity!—not only is the octahedron the primary crystal of that metal also, but all its secondary modifications exactly correspond with those of the diamond. Modern science has made no further advance towards a solution of this problem beyond that propounded as a certainty in the ancient *Timæus*. But without solving the problem, it is clearly worth while for persons likely to travel in gold-bearing regions to know a rough diamond when they see it. Otherwise, they may make ducks and drakes with pebbles that would pay for their preservation.

Two points determine the value of diamonds—their weight, which can be estimated in the rough, and their lustre, or water, which is less easy to judge of. An old treatise says, “The Water called *Cœlestis* is the Worth of all, and yet is somewhat difficult to discover in a rough Diamond. The only infallible Way is to examine it in the Shade of some tufted Tree. In Europe, the Lapidaries examine the Goodness of their rough Diamonds, their Water, Points, &c., by Daylight ; in the Indies, they do it by Night.”

The diamond is the only gem which becomes phosphorescent in the dark after long exposure to the sun's rays, or, Boyle says, after steeping in hot water. Dr. Wall, in the *Philosophical Transactions*, gives his “infallible method” of distinguishing diamonds from other stones. A diamond with an easy slight friction in the dark with any soft animal substance, as the finger, woollen cloth, or silk, appears luminous in its whole body. Nay, if you keep rubbing for some time, and then expose it to the eye, it will remain so for some time. The excessive hardness of the diamond is another extraordinary and superlative quality which sets it apart from most other known substances.

The history of individual diamonds is often strange and romantic. They have influenced the fortunes of families, dynasties, and nations. They bring with them luck, good or ill. Take the Pitt or Regent diamond, which was found at Puteal, forty-five leagues from the city of Goconda, and next to Mirgimola's (the “Mogul” Diamond) was the largest on record, weighing in the rough four hundred and ten carats.

Pride, they say, feels no pain ; nor, sometimes, does poverty. The slave who found this precious pebble concealed it, as the story goes, in a gash made to receive it in the calf of his leg until he found an opportunity of escaping to Madras. There the poor wretch fell in with an English skipper who, by promising to find a purchaser for the stone on condition of sharing half the proceeds, lured him to his ship, and there disposed of his claims by pitching him overboard. A Parsee merchant of the name of Jamchund bought this wonderful specimen from the thief and murderer for the paltry sum of one thousand pounds, which sum he (the murderer) speedily squandered in debauchery, and, when it was finished, hanged himself.

Governor Pitt, of Fort St. George, Madras, states that he purchased it himself of Jamchund for twelve thousand five hundred pounds. Pope, to his annoyance, tried to rob him of the credit of doing so by assigning its acquisition to the agency of an “honest factor.” To cut it into a perfect brilliant, in London, occupied two whole years, at a cost of five thousand pounds ; which outlay was nearly covered by the value (three thousand five hundred pounds) of the fragments separated in shaping it. This operation reduced its weight to one hundred and thirty-six carats and seven-eighths, but made it, for perfection of shape as well as for purity of water, the first diamond in the world, which it still remains.

The fame of this incomparable jewel soon spread all over Europe. Uffenbach, a German traveller who visited this country in 1712, states that he made many fruitless attempts to get a sight of it. There was no obtaining an interview with Governor Pitt, its far from enviable possessor. So fearful was he of robbery (not without cause) that he never let be known beforehand the day of his coming to town, nor slept in the same house twice consecutively. During the next five years—that is, until after long negotiation the Regent Orleans relieved him of its custody in 1717—Pitt must have felt his too-precious stone almost as harassing a possession as its first finder did. He finally sold it for one hundred and thirty-five thousand pounds, a price considered much below its value ; for, in the inventory of the Regalia, it is entered at twelve millions of francs, or four hundred and eighty thousand pounds.

In September, 1792, the great robbery of the *Garde Meuble* occurred. Together with the other regalia of France, the Sancy and the Regent diamonds were stolen. The former, being more convertible than its companion, was never recovered, although a diamond exactly answering to its description afterwards turned up. This robbery was effected under circumstances of great suspicion in respect to the keepers, who were supposed to have acted in the interest of the royal family. The regalia, including gold plate of almost incalculable value, had been sealed up by the officers of the Commune of Paris, after the massacres of the 10th of August. On the 17th of the following month, the seals were found broken, the locks picked by means of false keys, and the cabinets empty. The thieves were never discovered ; but an anonymous letter directed to the Commune gave information where to find the Regent together with a noble agate chalice, the latter stripped of its precious gold mounting. Both these objects were too well known to be convertible into money without certain detection. Hence this politeness on the part of the thieves ; but everything else had disappeared for ever.

Upon this diamond Buonaparte may be said to have founded his fortunes. It was verily the rock on which his empire was built. After the famous 18th of Brumaire, by pledging the Regent to the Dutch government, he procured

the funds indispensable for the consolidation of his power. After he became emperor, he wore the diamond set in the pommel of his state-sword; doubtless holding *that* to be a more significant article of his imperial paraphernalia than either crown or sceptre.

This remarkable gem exerted a direct influence in raising to the helm of government of two hostile nations: in one, the Corsican adventurer; in the other his renowned adversary, William Pitt, whose accession to the premiership would probably never have occurred but for the fortune based upon his great grandfather's lucky hit.

The Koh-i-noor has hitherto been a fatal jewel. May its recent recutting have broken the spell! Its history is well authenticated at every step. This stone of fate seems never to have been lost sight of from the days when Ala-ud-deen took it from the Rajahs of Malwa, five centuries and a half ago, to the day when it became a crown-jewel of England. Tradition carries back its existence in the memory of India to the year 57 B.C.; and a still wilder legend would fain recognise in it a diamond first discovered near Masulipatam, in the bed of the Godavery, five thousand years ago.

The Koh-i-noor is reported by Baber, the founder of the Mogul Empire, to have come into the Delhi treasury from the conquest of Malwa, in 1304. The Hindoos trace the curses and the ultimate ruin inevitably brought upon its successive possessors by the *genius* of this fateful jewel ever since it was first wrested from the line of Vikramaditya. If we glance over its history since 1304, its malevolent influence far excels that of the necklace for which Eriphyle betrayed her husband, or the Egeus Scianus of Greek and Roman tradition. First falls the vigorous Patan, then the mighty Mogul Empire, and, with vastly accelerated ruin, the power of Nadir, of the Dooranee dynasty, and of the Sikh. Runjeet Singh, when it was in his possession, was so convinced of the truth of this belief, that being satisfied with the enjoyment of it during his own lifetime, he sought to break through the ordinance of fate and the consequent destruction of his family by bequeathing the stone to the shrine of Juggernaut for the good of his soul and the preservation of his dynasty. His successors would not give up the baleful treasure, and the last Maharajah is now a private gentleman. In 1850, in the name of the East India Company (since, in its turn, defunct), Lord Dalhousie presented the Koh-i-noor to Queen Victoria.

Perhaps we should have been better without it; such, at least, appears to be Mr. King's opinion. The Brahmins will hardly relinquish their faith in the malignant powers possessed by this stone, when they think of the speedily following Russian war, which annihilated the prestige of the British army, and the Sepoy mutiny three years later, which caused England's existence as a nation to hang for months on the forbearance of one man.

The public saw the Koh-i-noor lustreless at the Exhibition of 1851, then weighing one hundred and eighty-six carats. Its re-cutting, performed in 1862, though executed with the utmost skill and perfection, has deprived the stone of all its historical and mineralogical interest. As a specimen of a gigantic diamond, whose native weight and form had been interfered with as little as possible (for with Hindoo lapidaries the grand object is the preservation of weight), it stood without a rival, save the Orloff, in Europe. As it is, in the place of the most ancient gem in the history of the world—older even than the Tables of the Law and the Breastplate of Aaron, supposing them still to exist—we get, according to Mr. King, a bad-shaped, because too shallow, modern brilliant, a mere lady's bauble, of but second-rate water, for it has a greyish tinge, and, besides, inferior in weight to several, being now reduced to one hundred and two carats and a half.

The operation of re-cutting was performed in London, under the care of the Messrs. Garrards, the Queen's jewellers, who erected for that purpose a small four-horse steam engine on their premises. It was conducted by Voorsanger and another skilful workman sent over by M. Coster from Amsterdam. In consequence of the advantage gained by using steam power, the actual cutting occupied no more than thirty-eight working days—a striking contrast to the two years necessary for cutting the Pitt diamond by the old hand process. In some parts of the work, as when it was necessary to grind out a deep flaw, the wheel made three thousand revolutions per minute.

Mr. King is equally full of pleasant lore touching other gems, as well as gold and silver. One emerald story has escaped him. It is told, if our memory is correct, by Forbes, in his *Oriental Memoirs*.

A person, whoever he was, was watching a swarm of fireflies in an Indian grove one moonlight night. After hovering for a time in the moonbeams, one particular firefly, more brilliant than the rest, alighted on the grass, and there remained. The spectator, struck by its fixity, and approaching to ascertain the cause, found, not an insect, but an emerald, which he appropriated and afterwards wore in a ring.

When the possession of a valuable is hard to account for, one tale may sometimes be as good as another—provided there be but a tale.

MAN OVERBOARD.

THE FIRST MATE.

Nor alone in the storm lurk the danger and the sorrow.

One evening, years ago, doing duty on the deck,
I heard a sailor shout, "Man overboard!" and looking
Over the calm Atlantic, saw him, floating dimly like
a speck!

We could not stop the engines, going fifteen knots an
hour,

Or throw him out a life buoy, so rapidly we sped;
But I caught, like a thought, his face to Heaven up-
turning,

And prayed for his soul as we left him with the dead.

THE PASSENGER.

Not alone in the sea do the men go down in billows.
I have seen such things on land mid the humble and
the proud.

Men of mark and men of none, and leviathans of
commerce

Go down in calmest weather, in the deep un pitying
crowd.

A flutter and a plash, and a short expiring struggle,
As the great big Ship of Life roars, and steams, and
rushes by:

Man overboard? What matters? The paddles roll for
ever,—

'Tis the hand of Fate hath done it. Let him die!

NEW UNCOMMERCIAL SAMPLES.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

MR. BARLOW.

A GREAT reader of good fiction at an unusually early age, it seems to me as though I had been born under the superintendence of the estimable but terrific gentleman whose name stands at the head of my present reflections. The instructive monomaniac, Mr. Barlow, will be remembered as the tutor of Master Harry Sandford and Master Tommy Merton. He knew everything, and didactically improved all sorts of occasions, from the consumption of a plate of cherries to the contemplation of a starlight night. What youth came to without Mr. Barlow, was displayed, in the history of Sandford and Merton, by the example of a certain awful Master Mash. This young wretch wore buckles and powder, conducted himself with insupportable levity at the theatre, had no idea of facing a mad bull single-handed (in which I think him less reprehensible, as remotely reflecting my own character), and was a frightful instance of the enervating effects of luxury upon the human race.

Strange destiny on the part of Mr. Barlow, to go down to posterity as childhood's first experience of a Bore! Immortal Mr. Barlow, boring his way through the verdant freshness of ages!

My personal indictment against Mr. Barlow is one of many counts. I will proceed to set forth a few of the injuries he has done me.

In the first place, he never made, or took, a joke. This insensibility on Mr. Barlow's part not only cast its own gloom over my boyhood, but blighted even the sixpenny jest books of the time. For, groaning under a moral spell constraining me to refer all things to Mr. Barlow, I could not choose but ask myself in a whisper when tickled by a printed jest, "What would *he* think of it? What would *he* see in it?" The point of the

jest immediately became a sting, and stung my conscience. For, my mind's eye saw him stolid, frigid, perchance taking from its shelf some dreary Greek book and translating at full length what some dismal sage said (and touched up afterwards, perhaps, for publication), when he banished some unlucky joker from Athens.

The incompatibility of Mr. Barlow with all other portions of my young life but himself, the adamantine inadaptability of the man to my favourite fancies and amusements, is the thing for which I hate him most. What right had he to bore his way into my Arabian Nights? Yet he did. He was always hinting doubts of the veracity of Sindbad the Sailor. If he could have got hold of the Wonderful Lamp, I knew he would have trimmed it, and lighted it, and delivered a lecture over it on the qualities of sperm oil, with a glance at the whale fisheries. He would so soon have found out—on mechanical principles—the peg in the neck of the Enchanted Horse, and would have turned it the right way in so workmanlike a manner, that the horse could never have got any height into the air, and the story couldn't have been. He would have proved, by map and compass, that there was no such kingdom as the delightful kingdom of Casgar, on the frontiers of Tartary. He would have caused that hypocritical young prig, Harry, to make an experiment—with the aid of a temporary building in the garden and a dummy—demonstrating that you couldn't let a choked Hunchback down an eastern chimney with a cord, and leave him upright on the hearth to terrify the Sultan's purveyor.

The golden sounds of the overture to the first metropolitan pantomime I remember, were alloyed by Mr. Barlow. Click click, ting ting, bang bang, weedle weedle weedle, Bang! I recall the chilling air that passed across my frame and cooled my hot delight, as the thought occurred to me: "This would never do for Mr. Barlow!" After the curtain drew up, dreadful doubts of Mr. Barlow's considering the costumes of the Nymphs of the Nebula as being sufficiently opaque, obtruded themselves on my enjoyment. In the Clown I perceived two persons; one, a fascinating unaccountable creature of a hectic complexion, joyous in spirits though feeble in intellect with flashes of brilliancy: the other, a pupil for Mr. Barlow. I thought how Mr. Barlow would secretly rise early in the morning, and butter the pavement for *him*, and, when he had brought

him down, would look severely out of his study-window and ask *him* how he enjoyed the fun. I thought how Mr. Barlow would heat all the pokers in the house and singe him with the whole collection, to bring him better acquainted with the properties of incandescent iron, on which he (Barlow) would fully expatiate. I pictured Mr. Barlow's instituting a comparison between the clown's conduct at his studies—drinking up the ink, licking his copy-book, and using his head for blotting-paper—and that of the already mentioned young Prig of Prigs, Harry, sitting at the Barlovian feet, sneakily pretending to be in a rapture of useful knowledge. I thought how soon Mr. Barlow would smooth the clown's hair down, instead of letting it stand erect in three tall tufts; and how, after a couple of years or so with Mr. Barlow, he would keep his legs close together when he walked, and would take his hands out of his big loose pockets, and wouldn't have a jump left in him.

That I am particularly ignorant what most things in the universe are made of, and how they are made, is another of my charges against Mr. Barlow. With the dread upon me of developing into a Harry, and with the further dread upon me of being Barlowed if I made inquiries, by bringing down upon myself a cold shower-bath of explanations and experiments, I forbore enlightenment in my youth, and became, as they say in melodramas, "the wreck you now behold." That I consorted with idlers and dunces, is another of the melancholy facts for which I hold Mr. Barlow responsible. That Pragmatical Prig, Harry, became so detestable, in my sight, that, he being reported studious in the South, I would have fled idle to the extremest North. Better to learn misconduct from a Master Mash than science and statistics from a Sandford! So I took the path which, but for Mr. Barlow, I might never have trodden. Thought I with a shudder, "Mr. Barlow is a bore, with an immense constructive power of making bores. His prize specimen is a bore. He seeks to make a bore of me. That Knowledge is Power I am not prepared to gainsay; but, with Mr. Barlow, Knowledge is Power to bore." Therefore I took refuge in the Caves of Ignorance, wherein I have resided ever since, and which are still my private address.

But the weightiest charge of all my charges against Mr. Barlow is, that he still walks the earth in various disguises, seeking to make a Tommy of me, even in my

maturity. Irrepressible instructive monomaniac, Mr. Barlow fills my life with pitfalls, and lies hiding at the bottom to burst out upon me when I least expect him.

A few of these dismal experiences of mine shall suffice.

Knowing Mr. Barlow to have invested largely in the Moving Panorama trade, and having on various occasions identified him in the dark, with a long wand in his hand, holding forth in his old way (made more appalling in this connexion, by his sometimes cracking a piece of Mr. Carlyle's own Dead-Sea Fruit in mistake for a joke), I systematically shun pictorial entertainment on rollers. Similarly I should demand responsible bail and guarantee against the appearance of Mr. Barlow, before committing myself to attendance at any assemblage of my fellow-creatures where a bottle of water and a note-book were conspicuous objects. For, in either of those associations, I should expressly expect him. But such is the designing nature of the man, that he steals in where no reasonable precaution or prevision could expect him. As in the following case:

Adjoining the Caves of Ignorance is a country town. In this country town, the Mississippi Momuses, nine in number, were announced to appear in the Town Hall, for the general delectation, this last Christmas week. Knowing Mr. Barlow to be unconnected with the Mississippi, though holding republican opinions, and deeming myself secure, I took a stall. My object was to hear and see the Mississippi Momuses in what the bills described as their "National Ballads, Plantation Break-Downs, Nigger Part-Songs, Choice Conundrums, Sparkling Repartees, &c." I found the nine dressed alike, in the black coat and trousers, white waistcoat, very large shirt-front, very large shirt-collar, and very large white tie and wristbands, which constitute the dress of the mass of the African race, and which has been observed by travellers to prevail over a vast number of degrees of latitude. All the nine rolled their eyes exceedingly, and had very red lips. At the extremities of the curve they formed seated in their chairs, were the performers on the Tam-bourine and Bones. The centre Momus, a black of melancholy aspect (who inspired me with a vague uneasiness for which I could not then account), performed on a Mississippi instrument closely resembling what was once called in this Island a hurdy-gurdy. The Momuses on either side of him

had each another instrument peculiar to the Father of Waters, which may be likened to a stringed weather-glass held upside down. There were likewise a little flute, and a violin. All went well for a while, and we had had several sparkling repartees exchanged between the performers on the tambourine and bones, when the black of melancholy aspect, turning to the latter, and addressing him in a deep and improving voice as "Bones, sir," delivered certain grave remarks to him concerning the juveniles present, and the season of the year; whereon I perceived that I was in the presence of Mr. Barlow—corked!

Another night—and this was in London—I attended the representation of a little comedy. As the characters were life-like (and consequently not improving), and as they went upon their several ways and designs without personally addressing themselves to me, I felt rather confident of coming through it without being regarded as Tommy; the more so, as we were clearly getting close to the end. But I deceived myself. All of a sudden, and apropos of nothing, everybody concerned came to a check and halt, advanced to the foot-lights in a general rally to take dead aim at me, and brought me down with a moral homily, in which I detected the dread hand of Barlow.

Nay, so intricate and subtle are the toils of this hunter, that on the very next night after that, I was again entrapped, where no vestige of a springe could have been apprehended by the timidest. It was a burlesque that I saw performed; an uncompromising burlesque, where everybody concerned, but especially the ladies, carried on at a very considerable rate indeed. Most prominent and active among the corps of performers was what I took to be (and she really gave me very fair opportunities of coming to a right conclusion) a young lady, of a pretty figure. She was dressed as a picturesque young gentleman, whose pantaloons had been cut off in their infancy, and she had very neat knees, and very neat satin boots. Immediately after singing a slang song and dancing a slang dance, this engaging figure approached the fatal lamps, and, bending over them, delivered in a thrilling voice a random Eulogium on, and Exhortation to pursue, the Virtues. "Great Heaven!" was my exclamation. "Barlow!"

There is still another aspect in which Mr. Barlow perpetually insists on my sustaining the character of Tommy, which is more unendurable yet, on account of its

extreme aggressiveness. For the purposes of a Review or newspaper, he will get up an abstruse subject with infinite pains, will Barlow, utterly regardless of the price of midnight oil, and indeed of everything else, save cramming himself to the eyes. But mark. When Mr. Barlow blows his information off, he is not contented with having rammed it home and discharged it upon me, Tommy, his target, but he pretends that he was always in possession of it, and made nothing of it—that he imbibed it with his mother's milk—and that I, the wretched Tommy, am most abjectly behind-hand in not having done the same. I ask why is Tommy to be always the foil of Mr. Barlow to this extent? What Mr. Barlow had not the slightest notion of, himself, a week ago, it surely cannot be any very heavy backsliding in me not to have at my fingers' ends to-day! And yet Mr. Barlow systematically carries it over me with a high hand, and will tauntingly ask me in his articles whether it is possible that I am not aware that every schoolboy knows that the fourteenth turning on the left in the steppes of Russia will conduct to such-and-such a wandering tribe? With other disparaging questions of like nature. So, when Mr. Barlow addresses a letter to any journal as a volunteer correspondent (which I frequently find him doing), he will previously have gotten somebody to tell him some tremendous technicality, and will write in the coolest manner: "Now, Sir, I may assume that every reader of your columns, possessing average information and intelligence, knows as well as I do that"—say that the draught from the touch-hole of a cannon of such a calibre, bears such a proportion in the nicest fractions to the draught from the muzzle; or some equally familiar little fact. But whatever it is, be certain that it always tends to the exaltation of Mr. Barlow, and the depression of his enforced and enslaved pupil.

Mr. Barlow's knowledge of my own pursuits, I find to be so profound, that my own knowledge of them becomes as nothing. Mr. Barlow (disguised and bearing a feigned name, but detected by me) has occasionally taught me, in a sonorous voice, from end to end of a long dinner table, trifles that I took the liberty of teaching him five-and-twenty years ago. My closing article of impeachment against Mr. Barlow, is, that he goes out to breakfast, goes out to dinner, goes out everywhere high and low, and that he WILL preach to

me, and that I CAN'T get rid of him. He makes of me a Promethean Tommy, bound; and he is the vulture that gorges itself upon the liver of my uninstructed mind.

LITTLE ITALY'S SCHOOL-BELL.

"RINGLE - tingle - tingle - ring - ting - ting." Now, my little friends (says dame Progress, appearing at the door, her active fingers never ceasing their work, her eager eyes scanning the disordered legions), time, time! No more lying in the sunny corners, no more ruinous gambling with brass buttons, no more duckings and divings for the amusement of travelling boobies as idle as yourselves, begging, bickering, and leading of lives such as an intelligent street cur, if he had the chance, would proudly reject in favour of his own. Come in, I say, every boy of you, and listen to me. Gaetano, put on your shoes. Do that again, Luigi, and I'll—

Well, you have played at soldiers long enough, and—mercy, Giuseppe! what a cut the boy has got! "Fighting with the Roman fellow?" Served you right, then. You were brothers. "Thrashed him all the same, would you, if it hadn't been for the big French bully that always takes his part?" Well, you knew he *would* do so, and that he is three times your size! No more swimming-matches, nor sailing of boats, for the present. Remember what happened on the pond at Lissa, from going out without your corks. Boys of other schools are busy with their tasks, or amusing themselves with their own little games, and here's a beautiful opportunity for you and me. Antonio, and Pietro, stand apart. Giovenico, instead of egging them on, stand between them, and mind, my eye is upon you.

Something very dreadful has been publicly told of you lately—something, my boys, that might excuse what most of you are doing now, putting your fingers in your mouths, ashamed. Seventeen millions, out of twenty-five, that have not learned to read and write! I am quite shocked. If it had not been said by a statesman and a newspaper, that always speak truth, I could have hoped there was a mistake. It is horrible, and I don't think I can go on.

I need not ask you, children, whether you have ever heard the name of Giuseppe Garib—Hush! You stun me. Shout when I've done. Well, this Giuseppe—too wise to be a statesman, too great to be a king—desiring to free you from the bondage of the most cruel and oppressive tyrant of the age—ignorance—seeks no allies but the liberal and enlightened heart, uses no weapons but those of peace and love.

He knows—and *we* know—that the strife is strong, and that the victory will be hard. For ignorance is slow to overcome, and has but too large a body of devoted adherents, whose interest it is that the tyrant should continue to hold the human race in thrall.

The war-note, however, has sounded. The

battle has begun. You know what Giuseppe said, when they wrote to him that they were about to erect a statue to his honour. "While one child, in the district you govern, remains uneducated, raise no statue to me."

Now, my children, though reading, and writing, and the certainty that two and two are *four*—are excellent acquirements, as far as they go—(and that is, at present, far ahead of *us*) people cannot always live upon and by them. Know that your well-wishers do not limit their desires and efforts to teaching you these—to giving you the key of wisdom's treasure-chest—and leaving you, uncertain and bewildered, in the presence of her rich and varied store. They would—under that Providence which they pray may guide their judgment—become instrumental in directing yours.

Our Italy has many a school already, where such an education as I have described is lucidly and sedulously bestowed; but the task of the teachers seems to end where that which we propose to ourselves really begins. You must not alone be made reading and writing machines, but must be put in the way to become as you grow up, good husbands and fathers—good wives and mothers—good citizens, good soldiers, good men.

The idea suggested by Garibaldi has been understood and accepted in his own country; but, at present, that country is poor, oppressed with debt, laden with inevitable taxation. Good people, in countries blessed with peace and plenty, have come to our aid, and large-handed England, whose heart was with us in our fight for freedom, now assists us to realise the benefits that freedom brings.

Folks there are, I am told, who grumble, and demand *why*, seeing that there are still poor and ignorant people at home, the money is not all given to *them*. My boys, mankind is but one family. If the meal within the house has been but coarse and scanty, shall the beggar without be left to perish for need of the crumbs? When England, in a time of trial, received large gifts for her suffering thousands from France and America, I do not remember that any voice in those noble countries was raised against that generous recognition of the universal brotherhood of man.

It is the very success of liberal home efforts that has encouraged our English friends to give them a wider extension. In Ireland schools, such as those proposed for us, have been some time established. Not only have they answered their original benevolent end, but have attained another, not the least advantage of which is, that it silences the grumblers I have alluded to. *The schools support themselves.*

Boys and girls, is it not a better thing to live by the labour of your own honest hands—to become useful, active, intelligent beings—than to lie wallowing among the clods of the earth? I see by your attention that you are listening to me, and striving to comprehend what you are invited to do. Well, then, first, what is to be learned? I will tell you.

Boys: Reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography, general and natural history, book-keeping, and singing.

Girls: All these good things, with the addition of cooking, the management of house and kitchen, washing, and needlework.

But it is not all work—for learning, though pleasant, is work—and therefore, besides all these, there will be, when funds allow, playgrounds for gymnastic exercises, stretching of limbs and muscles, and workshops for industrial instruction. Boys will be trained to gardening and general agriculture, as well as to the more essential trades—tailors, shoemakers, carpenters, &c.

Gradually this work will be turned to good account, independent of the instruction gained therefrom; for, if it has been found profitable in Ireland, surely in Italy, where there is a perpetual and ever-increasing demand for good laundresses, domestic servants, and skilled workers of every description, there will be plenty of work for the schools. It is consequently proposed to pay, not for your education only, but your partial board and clothing, from the actual work which, in part of your school hours, you will accomplish.

Thus, it is hoped, when all is in order, the produce of the afternoon work will defray the morning's teaching and the noonday meal. Let me hope that a spirit of independence will thereby be engendered among you, as a band of hearty comrades, providing, by the work of their own strong skilful hands, the means of mental advancement and the foundation of happy and contented, perhaps even prosperous and distinguished, lives.

By the by, I mentioned a "meal;" that is a thing of importance. I have not said enough about it. At half-past twelve (especially when I have been working cheerfully since breakfast), I begin to think how good a thing is polenta! Rice is not bad, but give me polenta! And polenta *with cheese*! I can only say that if King Victor himself, after a day with the chamois, desires anything more delicious, he hardly deserves to be your king.

I must warn you, however, children, that this cheese is a very uncertain sensitive thing. Idleness, noise (fighting especially), seem to frighten it away. Polenta may always come, but where there is goodness and industry, only *there* can you be sure of finding polenta, *with cheese*!

At our new school, at Cagliari, the first that will be opened on our system, you will find, in addition to large and well-lighted rooms, a pretty garden and orchard. There will be maps, books, pictures for illustration of what is taught, and many curious things never yet presented to your eyes, but of which you will quickly learn the use. A printing-press, a sewing-machine, patent machines for washing, wringing, and mangling, a plaiting-machine, and no less than a hundred and fifty boxes of toys! The greater part of these things have been provided by one generous hand—that of the president of the English committee, Mrs.

Chambers—and, as fifteen schools in her native land already owe their well-being to her, let us hope that her countrymen will forgive the gracious finger she extends to us.

And now, children, one little last word, to which I require your best attention. Upon no human institution, however nobly meant or ably planned, can we hope a blessing to descend unless the principles of a pure and true religion are inculcated there. Now, to our walls, pupils of all creeds—Roman Catholics, Protestants, Jews, &c.—are alike welcome. But to accept the spiritual assistance of professed teachers of each several creed has been found so productive of disunion and mistrust, that it has been decided to decline the attendance of any, and to confide to the authorised teacher and the ladies of the visiting committee the all-important duty of religious instruction, founded, as it will be, upon the blessed truths of the New Testament.

For my part, I assent to the eloquent words of one whose voice will not again be heard on earth.

"In the better order of things, Heaven grant that the ministry of souls may be left in charge of woman! The gates of the Blessed City will be thronged with the multitude that enter in, when that day comes. The task belongs to woman; God meant it for her; He has endowed her with the religious sentiment in its utmost depth and purity, refined from that gross intellectual alloy with which every masculine theologian—save only One, who merely veiled himself in mortal and masculine shape, but was in truth divine—has been prone to mingle it."*

There, boys and girls of Italy—that is a long sentence, but it finishes my lecture. And now—all in to begin!

OLD LOVES.

THE Frenchman who said that we always return to our first loves, said one of the true things of human nature; and every mature mind knows its truth. We do return to our old loves, and no after affection ever destroys their place in our hearts.

There are abundant reasons for this going back upon life—at least in thought and desire if not in actual renewal. In youth, when our sensations were all new, and when the mere fact of living was in itself a joy, everything was painted in with rose colour: everything was perfect, and each emotion in its novelty was a veritable revelation of the divine. We had not then become blunted by satiety, chilled or corrected by experience. We firmly believed that what we felt, no one else had ever felt before, or would ever feel again with anything like our intensity; we firmly believed that all other people's emotions were tame and colourless beside our own. For youth is in itself a perpetual recreation of the primeval

* Hawthorne.

Adam, and each man lives for a time in a paradise of his own making, which no brother has ever shared. We and our special Eve dwell in it alone, for just so long a time as the fervour and inexperience of our first passion last. The pity is, that it lasts so short a time, and that we wake, while yet so young to the consciousness that all this exquisite delight is only delusion, and that "the mind sees what it brings" in love as well as in other things.

The love of a boy or girl is unique. It is never repeated in kind, though it may be even surpassed in degree; for the love of the mature heart is more powerful than that of the youthful; but the freshness, the ecstatic sense of certainty, the sublime belief in itself and its own immortality, in its unchangeableness and future, characteristic of the first young love, have no echo even in the strength and fidelity of the mature. Besides, it is so divinely blind; and its blindness remains, though the eyes may be couched to see everything else. Though our early charmer was snub-nosed and red headed, and fully half a dozen years our elder, yet our memory plays magic tricks with reality, and we think of her to this day, as we believed her at the time: beautiful, golden haired, and sixteen. If we have never seen her since that fatal hour when we tore ourselves from her side in an agony of despair at the cruel fate which sent us to New Zealand or the West Indies, no shock of personal experience has shattered the sweet falsehood of our boyish dreams, and she will always be to us what she was; but if we have seen her after our eyes have been couched, we stand aghast, as at the discovery of some *Méline* in her serpent state. That plain-featured, commonplace dowdy is no more the peerless *Dulcinea* of only ten years ago, than she is her own grandmother. Henceforth she is two persons: the one, living in memory: the other in actuality; and of the two the remembrance is the more real.

No one makes any allowance for the action of time in another, or expects to find any striking change, how long soever the interval between the last parting and the present meeting. An increasing waistcoat and a decreasing chevelure in ourselves, tell us beyond all question of an airy youth for ever fled, and a middle-aged respectability settled down heavily in its stead: yet we look to find our boyish ideal exactly where we left her, and heave no end of deprecatory sighs when we see the thickened jowl, the broadened waist, the puffy foot, the meagre wisp of greyish hair, sole remnant of those glorious tresses which might have been *Godiva's*. "Who would have thought it?" we say compassionately, forgetting the lesson set us daily by our own looking-glass. And then we turn our faces backward, and know that the *Godiva* of our early love is dead, buried ten fathoms deep by the almighty hand of Time, and that she has left only her memory to keep us company. But her memory is immortal, and over this Time has no kind of power.

Yet there are old loves for whom, when we have got over the first shock of disappoint-

ment at finding that forty is not as twenty was, we knit up the ravelled edges of time, and carry the past into the present—if in paler colours and a less florid pattern, yet with a joined thread that makes the two epochs one. Our love remains the same in essentials, with a difference in forms. A tender mellowness of affection has taken the place of the old fervid fiery passion which once consumed as much as it warmed, and we seem to have carried on into the present the whole accumulated strength of the past. Certain phrases, looks, and tones, remind us so vividly of by-gone days that at last we lose all sharpness of perception, and can scarcely distinguish between then and now, till the past becomes the present, blended and inseparable, and the mind cannot recognise any break. We all know instances of the first love married after the severance perhaps of a quarter of a century, with two flourishing families in the mean time—instances where maturity has taken up the parable of youth, and life has doubled back upon itself, and ended at its starting place. Such reunions are not necessarily either happy or unsuccessful. It all depends on the amount of mental sympathy possible between the pair, after the warping of their diverse experiences, whether the memory of their youthful fancy can be consolidated into a living love or no. If the love have been very true and earnest, and if it have never failed, though it may have been overlaid and even forgotten, the chances are that the marriage will be happy; but say it has been only a fancy, without solid foundation in the inner chambers of the heart, and then the chances are the other way, and the look out is dubious. But even then, and at the worst, the luckless experimenters have the memory of the time when they thought they loved. At the worst, they can lay the blame on time and distance, and think: "Ah, well! if they had been married early in life, when they wished it, they would have fitted better than they do now; they would have each been more plastic, and by this time would have been welded together as well as wedded." But an adverse fate came in between, and hardened angles are the result.

There is something inexpressibly soothing to our failing vanity, in being with those who have known us at our best. "Ah! you should have known him twenty years ago," is a salve to many a man's mortification when a young and irreverent generation passes him by as an old fogey, not worth a thought—he who once charmed his club and commanded a following as large as a moderate sized constituency. And if this be true of men, it is still more so of women, who depend for social repute and influence more on their personal charms—which time ruthlessly handles—than on their intellectual acquirements, which are of tougher material, and not so soon frayed and torn. In fact, one of the best things about early marriages hangs on this point. The gradual carrying on into old age of the beauty and sweetness of youth, gives a kind of youth even to old age. A new husband would be ashamed to take about that

My pet will see this at a glance, that the two colours really alternate in equal batches. Had I been one of the players—just to give you an idea of the easy way the money is made—I should have earned enough in ten minutes to have paid all our year's rent.

This morning, when we are all doing our procession at the wells, that agreeable man of God, the Dean of —, comes up to me, with that smug obsequiousness which he has unconsciously got to exhibit to inferiors, from the habit of always addressing lords and baronets.

"I saw your name," he said, "in the *Fremdenliste*, and at once thought you must be one of the Edward Austens of Berkshire. Am I right—the member?"

"Yes," I said; "my father was Edward Austen, the member."

"Good gracious! I was sure of it. How wonderful are the ways"—he was going to add "of Providence!" but more decorously substituted, "the ways—ahem—we find people turning up!"

Of course he had not heard of my fall in the world, or, if he had, thought it was one of those genteel bits of ruin which don't affect people of condition. He was a great man at a charity sermon, and very strong "against Rome." We walked up and down together, he chattering all the time, with every now and again a nod and "How d'ye do?" to some one. After which he would get abstracted, and look after that lord uneasily—I think meditating whether there was likely to be a vacancy beside the lord, when *he* might join in. I remember a sermon by this dignitary of extraordinary warmth and power, on the text, "Go up higher," which, in his own life, he illustrated forcibly; and I believe the true bearing for him of the text was unconsciously this: "he that humbleth himself" was to do so, through the hope of being exalted! I dare say I do him wrong in this, for he was a charitable man; but certainly loved a lord a little too much. He asked me, "to make one of their party" at dinner at the Shepherdess, a mean, obscure place, which some irreverent people always called "that pot-house of a place," but where "the swells" were fond of planning dinners. Is not this the world all over? Some obscure spot or thing is taken up by "ladies of quality"—no matter what discomfort or stupidity follows—the world pronounces it *charming*, and would give their poor battered souls—the cheapest thing they have—to get there.

I went to the Shepherdess that evening, and found ten people at the dean's table. Only one lord—the salt of the earth—but certainly some "nice people," as he would call them. The dinner was bad enough, as, indeed, Mr. Boxwell, a hearty jovial member of parliament, said plainly.

"In fact, my dear dean, what surprises me altogether is to find you in this queer place at all."

"Find me here," repeated the dean—"find me here! Surely there are the nicest people—Lord —, Lady —, and Sir John; why, there is nothing queer about *them*."

"I don't mean that; but I was thinking of a sermon I have heard of yours, on 'Responsibility,' and all that, and how one preached more by simply not saying a word, than by regular sermons. A capital idea, by the way, which I wish was carried out in all our churches."

"Oh, that's all very well," said the dean. (I know these conversations amuse my pet, and I try to recollect scraps of them as nearly as possible.)

"In short, it is so droll to find all the good people gathered here—aprons, shovels, white ties, gaiters, high collars, holy faces—all clustered about a common gambling-house. You can call it *Kursaal*, and all that, and talk of the croupier and such dignified names; but we know, if the great Blanc himself took a scrubby room in St. James's-street, the police would just burst in, and drag him and his croupiers with unnecessary violence before Sir Thomas Henry, who would refuse bail."

I enjoyed this thoroughly. These are my own views, only put so much better. But the dean was a shrewd man, and when he saw we were all listening, said: "Oh, we come for our healths. We are ordered here, sir—our health. Those people have nothing to do with us. And, to tell you the truth, I don't look at it in that way at all. They tell me it is all perfectly fair and above board; and I *hear* the good they do, the sums they give away in charity, is something incalculable. The widows and the orphans of the place come to them, and never go away empty."

I was astonished to hear such careless language from a man in so responsible a position, and could not resist saying, "But how many a widow and orphan, Mr. Dean, have they made destitute? How many households have they filled with desolation? The ruin they have caused spreads over every land, and many and many are the

dismal messengers they have dismissed to English homes with hopeless news. No, their wretched alms, which they are *forced* to pay, is no compensation for this wholesale pillage."

I spoke warmly, and the dean looked at me with distrust. "That is all very good and sound, and we are all agreed, of course: but we must take things as we find 'em. These people found out the wells here, and worked 'em, and developed 'em. If I was inclined to a little sophistry or casuistry, Mr. Austen, I would ask you, wouldn't the myriads of rheumatic and dyspeptic fathers whom they have restored to health—the thousands of wasting daughters to whose cheeks the what-d'ye-call-'em—Le Wheez'un"—so he pronounced it—"Well has brought back colour; the number of homes it has made happy! Is not all this a sort of compensation for the weak-minded, demoralised gambler, whom they justly punish? And serve 'em right too. Now, Mr. Austen."

"That's putting it very well, dean," said the member, laughing; "and, if I don't mistake, Mr. Austen has benefited amazingly himself by the gambling waters."

"Oh, no," said the dean, "there is too much cant about all this. There, we must take them as we find 'em. My stock-broker, worthy man, gives money to schools, holds plates, and all that—but he gambles on the Exchange, and wins; and who does he win from? From some one who has, perhaps, lost his all. He made a hundred thousand pounds in Italian stock the other day. Some poor wretch sold in the panic, and was destroyed. Well. He bought *his* stock. Look at the merchants. Look at Lord —, who made the last bishop, why he games on the turf. My good sir, if we're to go about setting right everything we see or *think* wrong, why the world might as well stop. We might all shut up. We must give and take."

I was indignant to hear such indifference from one in his sacred position—no heart, no earnestness—and I answered, warmly: "But, Mr. Dean, when we see this place crowded with holy—I mean with officially holy—men, is there not something more expected than giving and taking? What do we hear? Not a word, not a protest, not a denunciation of the wickedness going on about us; no thunderings from the pulpit. I cannot understand it. Surely, if we could suppose a Whitfield, or a Wesley, or a Knox, or a Luther were found here——"

"Heaven forbid!" said the member of parliament. "The place would get too hot for me! Come, we have had enough of this wine and of the Shepherdess; and to show that I quite approve of the dean's good sense, I am going up to the gambling-rooms now, to try what can be done with a napoleon."

As we went out the dean spoke to me very testily, as if he were sore and wincing under my thrust.

"You are a little too highflying, my friend," he said, "and not exactly cut out for a reformer. Believe me there is no harm in following the general consensus of leading men. You see all the distinguished personages here, lay and clerical, neither protest nor approve. They go their own way. Joshua was the only one who succeeded in stopping the sun. Above all, let us look at home, and keep a guard over ourselves. While you are busy giving directions, and helping the old ladies across the street, saving them from the omnibuses, you yourself may be run over."

And these are the pastors for the poor sheep of England; smooth words to make everything comfortable, and macadamise the road to salvation. This man is sure to be a bishop. Well, I shall say no more after *this*. He has taken no notice of me since.

CHAPTER XII.

MONDAY THE SIXTH.—The more I look about me in this strange world, and certainly in this strangest of places, the more do I feel that it is good for me *morally* to be here. For my weak but well meaning soul, it has the effect of bracing, nerving, cold water. I shall return home strengthened and invigorated. I am not at all sorry to have passed by these furnaces without being scorched. The man who shuts himself up, and turns away his eyes, is discreet, and if he knows himself to be weak all is right. Nay, a greater authority than I has written, he is *bound* to gird himself up and flee as fast as his poor tottering limbs can carry him. If I were a clergyman—a supposition I very often make, and there *was* some talk of it when I was a boy—I would ascend my pulpit, and preach eternally on this text. If you feel a spark of courage and strength, *face* the danger cautiously, practise, do as a man does who goes to a gymnasium and trains his muscles—begin to throw a half stone weight, and increases the amount by degrees. I would thunder this at the congregation until they began to think it was

a monomania, as I dare say she, whose eyes will be reading this by-and-by, may herself think. Or with more indulgence she will perhaps say, "My dear, I have heard Dr. Bulmer preach far worse." Well perhaps he has, and I have no business to be dressing myself up in a surplice—en amateur. But I say again this does me good, and it will do me good again to read it, and perhaps years hence strange eyes will fall upon it, and reflect, and own, perhaps a little comically, "Well, he is the first that has got sermons, not out of stones, which would be a limited range of subject; but out of roulette and the card table, and the wolfish eyes of 'hell keepers.'" There, darling, I won't preach again until further notice.

But the truth is, I am in a sort of elation, for I did more than mere rapid preaching this day. Speech may be silvern, silence golden, but *action* is, after all, a diamond. Going in this night to the roulette table, I see an unusual crowd, and faces showing that stupid interest and admiration which is about as sincere as that of the crowd who stand gaping at the fool-hardy Blondin, or the reckless Leotard. Fifty per cent of that crowd has a lingering and secret aspiration, that it might, if a catastrophe were to be, be only present to see it. Here I find they are staring at a tall gay Englishman, a fresh good-looking fellow in some regiment, and whose honest health and loud proclamation of the tub every morning, contrasts with the yellow, dirty faces and the niggardly economy of soap, linen, &c., which they insinuate. His play is of the boldest, not laying the table broadcast with his gold as some foolish ones do; but with a sort of instinct selecting a number here, another there, and "bedding and potting" it, as some one said, with his gold. What I delight in is his contemptuous treatment of the crew of croupiers, whom he treats as though they were mere scavengers or night men, not fit to be addressed, or as you would a dependant. He tosses them his money insolently, and makes them arrange it for him, and if they are awkward, speaks to them with a haughty arrogance that seems to exasperate them. He has won with many pieces on Zero, he has hit the number again and again, and I see the brigands' eyes of the "hell keepers," glancing at him furtively, with anger and dislike, as though they were thinking, "Shall we 'set' him with some of our bullies as he goes home to his hotel, and strip him of what he has robbed us

of?" Approving faces are bent on this darling, whom Fortune in one of her caprices dandles for a few seconds in her arms, like some pretty child, and then allows to drop on the pavement. The enamelled faces of the mermaids are turned towards him; and the rustling of their fins and tail is heard, as they come swimming round a new prey. I drew near to him, and heard him tell a friend behind, "I must have got more than a thousand out of them," and a voice that I know says, in its accustomed drawl, "Now is the time then, sack 'em, and you'll have the glory of being the first to break the bank this season." I knew it seemed intrusive, but I could not resist saying, in a low voice, "Now is the time to retire. Luck always changes."

The soapstone face was stretched round to look. "Oh! Grainger's friend," he said. "This is the gentleman I was telling you of, who has the system——"

"I have no system," I said, coolly.

"I was wrong, then, it seems," he went on. "The gentleman who preaches against the bank one day, and for his infallible system the next."

The young fellow was naturally not attending.

"Confound it!" he said. "The luck is turning. I have got nothing these last three turns. I'll take his advice, and carry off what I have bagged. Come, and let us count. Here's Grainger. Look here, Grainger, my boy!"

It was now about half-past eleven. Soon the mystic proclamation would be heard—"Aux trois derniers!" Grainger's eyes sparkled with an unholy fire of envy—possibly of disappointment, for I would not do him wrong—as he looked on the glittering treasure which the other was holding in his hand as though it were so much mould. But he turned to me suddenly.

"Here, Pollock, let me introduce a friend of mine—the hero of that little story which your brother knows."

I remembered there was a Captain Pollock in the regiment at that time, and I remember, Dora, being ludicrously jealous one night, at your dancing with him.

"Oh, indeed!" said the young fellow who had won. "I recollect. Poor Grainger was left out in the cold. But I tell you what; I'll stand a supper at Chevet's for the whole party—neat meat, neat wines, neat everything. Come, no excuse. The winner pays for all, and we'll count the cash between the courses."

Grainger was delighted. I don't set up to be a Puritan, as you know, Dora, and I always think of that saint with admiration, who used to play cards with a swearing and abandoned crew, and thus gradually acquired an influence over them. There again the complacency peeps out—an almost sacerdotal complacency. Precisely like a saint, am I not? But, again and again I repeat, this is all for your pretty eyes and my own ugly ones.

I went with them. I often say to myself, "On this day or on this night, let us have a little festival," when I have been good and deserve it; when I have been otherwise, I assure you I can be very stern and severe to myself. So we sat down and counted the gold, which was close on nine hundred napoleons. I own to a certain wrench and a yearning as I looked at it, and I think the amount of *unconscious* greediness—for we are all animals—in the three faces must have been overpowering. Two waiters afar off heard the chink—every ear learns that. They sniffed the dear metal as a vulture does carrion. Hungry gamblers looked up from their drink with ferocious envy. The owner alone was unconcerned.

"Confound the beggars! if I didn't think they'd swindle me, I'd have been as glad to have bank notes."

Here was the supper. D'Eyncourt—who to his other vices added that of gourmandise—spoke little and eat heartily. I confess to doing the same, and most gratefully do I owe my thanks to the Providence who has so restored me as to give me the power of enjoying moderately such things. What have I done to deserve these mercies, and not become like one of the worn-out beings who come here and drink with a faint hope of miraculously recovering their lost stomachs? We were very merry, Grainger specially so, and I suspected that the honest lad had helped his friend with a handful of what he had carried off. But D'Eyncourt's cat-like eyes fell on me several times, as if he was about to say something. He began, in his drawl:

"The more I see of you, Mr. Austen, the more you become a mystery to me."

I have put down some people before now, so I thought I would settle him before he went further.

"Curious," I said, "the more I see of you, the less you are a mystery; in fact, the first day I read you like a book."

Pollock laughed loud. "Hit you on the

sternum, my boy, and right, too, though not flattering."

"Austen's mauleys come down hard when they do come down," said Grainger.

"What I was saying," said D'Eyncourt, in his slow impressive way (which I *do* envy him), as though he had not heard, as if he had stopped speaking to light his cigar, which was now all right—"what I say is, I don't quite understand your rôle—I mean the attitude you have to this bank. If you disapprove it, I should keep away—turn my back on Jericho—let the fiery sword do its work; but I certainly wouldn't shelter myself under their gorgeous roof, sit on their luxurious sofas, read their English newspapers, with such strong convictions. I'd be almost inclined to go to M. Blanc, the head of the thing, and tell him so boldly."

I was not sorry that he had begun in this fashion, and really wished to "tackle" him before them.

"I think," said I, smiling, "we can all imagine M. Blanc's polite and pleasant repartee, if any such well-meaning remonstrant were to present himself. But the fact is, I do *not* use their Times or their luxurious sofas and chairs; and as for their roof—well, I own to taking that *ba. en* advantage of them."

"Had you again—on the nob this time, D'Eyncourt," said the youth, who had already taken more wine than fitted him to be a nice judge of such effects.

"Do leave those low boxing metaphors aside, Mr. Pollock—at least among gentlemen. You mayn't be in such spirits to-morrow night. But"—turning to me—"you are not quixotic enough to expect that a still small voice like yours—I mean your conscience's—could make itself heard in this Babel? Have you such a sense of comical self-delusion that you can place yourself at that large doorway and turn back the mob of scoundrels, blackguards, roughs, cheats, jailbirds, lorettes—aye, and even decent men and women—with your faint expostulation? Do you tell us that?"

"No," I said, firmly; and then, as politely as I could, "but, first of all, suppose it was my whim; I am as much entitled to have that as any one here."

"Scarcely," he said. "As a rule, the gamblers never make themselves ridiculous."

"That's like having *you*, my friend," said the boy to me.

"But, apart from mere verbal quib-

bling," I went on, "at the risk of exposing myself to the suspicion of what is called *cant*—which, of course, is saying something that is *moral, or religious, or improving*—"

"Excuse me; the sayer being neither moral nor religious, that is *cant*. And you have saved me the trouble of coming to the point; for I believe that, unconsciously, you are at heart as great a gambler as any of them; and—don't be offended—you know the greatest rock is that air of self-righteousness—'Take heed that ye deceive not yourselves.'"

"Come, no profane quoting here," said the youth, gravely.

"There is no profanity," I said, laughing; "your quotation is not in Scripture." I was in great vein now, and began to feel myself a match for him. "But supposing, now," I went on, "I succeeded in interposing between two, or one even, and their destruction, why I am foolish enough to think it worth while coming so far for that."

"For Grainger, here?" he sneered. "A brand plucked from the burning. You are the neophyte, it seems, Grainger. Well, there is a class of missionary they call 'souters,' and who have rather a suspicious class of converts. You're genuine. You're being brought to see the light, aren't you? Seriously," he added, turning to me, "you don't mean to tell us you have touched that rocky ground?"

"Seriously," I replied, impatiently, "I don't care to discuss such things with you."

"With all my heart, though I dare say our friend Grainger has been doing a little bit of the new regeneration—the softening of this stony heart, and all that. (There is a regular dialect for all that, which I profess myself not quite up to.) I can fancy him saying to you, 'What can I do? I am led on—dragged on. I have good intentions. I was virtuous once, and I would give worlds to be back in the old innocent times—the fields, the green, the buttercup—like you, in short.' Ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha!" roared the host. "Devilish good."

It was so like what Grainger had been saying, that I turned sharply and looked at him with surprise. He was looking at D'Eyncourt with quite a wicked glare.

"There is some devilish malignity always in your ideas, D'Eyncourt," he said—a speech that was certainly just and nicely descriptive. For he might certainly guess that I had, in my poor way and by

the grace of one greater than I was acting through me, made some impression on Grainger; and this artful ridicule would be precisely a fashion that Satan himself would have suggested for throwing him back.

"Come away," said D'Eyncourt; "we've had enough. Let us go in and see these honest fellows counting their money. I hope they have got a good bag to-night; they work hard enough for it, God knows—harder than many a fellow at home on his sixpence a day, and deserve every coin they get. Good luck to them! I hope they've emptied many a fool's pocket."

As we went out Grainger whispered, "You don't mind what that snarler says. He'd sneer at his dead mother. I'm bad enough, God knows—"

"Don't say a word, Grainger," I said, taking his arm; "his speeches will have very little effect on me."

We walked in to see this curious scene. With all my prejudices, I own that there is no such dramatic scene in the round of modern plays—though, on second thoughts, this is poor praise—as at the end of the long and weary day to find "the band" sitting round and counting their gains. As soon as the last deal is over I know what will come. In rush the hired bullies in their tawdry liveries, carrying brass-bound strong boxes and bags, and a large case. Other emissaries emerge, and all, as it were, fling themselves on the table. Last arrive two or three cold "bank managers," cruel looking men, with the cat-like, clean-shaven, pitiless M. B., who, having been at work all day, is now in at the close, to superintend the finish, and, I suppose, gloat over an unusual booty. Everything here is more than characteristic. The henchmen artfully draw a sort of barrier of chairs, pretending to draw them away from the table, in reality a fence against me and other English gentlemen, whom they sapiently think are full of designs for pillage and sack, and note their ridiculously suspicious looks. But the robber naturally thinks every stranger one of his cloth. I would not contaminate my fingers with their gold, nor would I do as I often see some of our virtuous English do—go up obsequiously to "M. Le Croupier," and ask him to change their fifty-pound bank-note, which he does so charmingly, "spilling" out five glistening rows of gold in a second, and giving the full exchange, so different from the cormorant bankers in the town. "That gold, madam,

came from the pockets of the tempted, of the falling; it was stolen, perhaps, or should have gone to the destitute or helpless; some of the moisture of a frantic agitation and despair still clings to it: and you can stoop to *accept* from these men the wretched four *sous* profit or so on each pound, and chuckle over and talk of their courtesy. No. For *my* little changings I am content to pay the few *sous*, and be under no obligations to this vice partnership.

It is *really* dramatic, the scene now going on. Every one is busy. Servants are under the table, with a lamp, raking up every scrap of paper—the torn cards, flung down in disgust and despair—the broken-down systems, sifting them in the hope, not often deferred, of coming on the stray note or dropped louis. Most carefully do they pry into the emptied rouleau case, for very often at the bottom lurks the forgotten piece. But they all watch each other. Men are busy at the tables gathering up large handfuls of the pure silver pieces, and with amazing dexterity are covering the whole table with squadrons and squares of them—little heaps of five, and the heaps in rows of five, and the rows of five in squares of five. So with the gold—the sovereigns in rows, the napoleons and fredericks all in regiments and apart. The notes are laid out in rows of five also. Another is busy, not breaking up the rouleaux, but weighing them one against the other; and they are regularly laid out in the same way. The banking cashing gentlemen, with spectacles on, printed forms before them, and pen in hand, are ready; when, all being ready, the senior of the place suddenly appears, and, taking a rake, taps every square of silver, and counts aloud as he goes on; in perhaps a minute has totted up the whole. Down go the figures in the forms, and then the hirelings come with the strong boxes and vast pocket-books for the notes, and shovel in all the ill-gotten gains, which are locked securely with *three* keys and borne away. After a good day, the pinched-faced M. B. goes out smiling and joking with his friend and brother; and, later on, turning into the superb billiard-rooms, I see him astride on a chair watching his friends, full of

merry jests, and smoking a cigar. At midnight, he will go home to his pretty villa and placens uxor, who will ask him how the bank fared to-day, and he will tell her gleefully what the winnings were. Of course he has a hundred or so of shares, and gets his seventy and eighty per cent. Think of that; think of all the villainies by which money is swindled from one man's pocket into another! The racing and betting man gets it from those who are as bad as he is, and who can afford it as well; even the housebreaker chooses the rich man's house for his swag; even the bandit will let the poor man free; but these wretches fatten on what produces the widows' tears and fathers' and husbands' curses. But I lose patience when I dwell on this, which, too, I cannot cure. If I was a zealous missionary at home, eager for "my Master's work," as they call it, I would not go out to the blacks, I would come here; I would stand at the door of this place; I would preach in the street, in front of this red sandstone palace—charnel house of infamy—and warn, dissuade, and exhort, passionately, with my whole heart and soul. *There* would be real saving of souls. Their gendarmes and police—I should have no fear of them. That good bluff king looks on them with no favour, and gives them a respite grudgingly. Utopian, some will say, of course, and smile. Nothing of the kind. But they would not have the courage. I solemnly declare, if I were in that profession, it is the thing I would do. One soul saved from that den, stopped at the threshold, would be worth all the blacks who ever simulated Christianity for a musket or two strings of glass beads. *There are* men in England—honest, zealous, ardent ministers—who would gladly seize on this idea: I want no copyright in it.

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